

## Shellfishermen Request Digging Limit

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

A group of Duxbury's commercial shellfishermen have requested the town reduce the number of days they can dig for clams from seven days to four. The change, supported by selectmen, will go into effect in April.

According to Harbormaster Donald Beers, the commercial shellfishermen approached him and the town's Shellfish Advisory Committee to ask the town change the days for harvesting soft shell and quahog clams. Instead of seven days a week, the new regulations will

only allow commercial digging on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. This doesn't affect recreational harvesting of soft shell clams, which is allowed Wednesdays and Saturdays in April, May, September and October or when bonus seasons

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are declared in other months.

Beers said the shellfishermen want this change to manage and preserve the clams in the bay. In the past three years, there has been an abundance of clams, and while they are still plentiful, Beers said, "We're on the backside of a tremendous resource."

"We think it's a move in the right direction," he said. "They're a great group of guys, and they're very concerned. They're looking at the long run and they're helping us manage this resource."

Of the 65 commercial shellfish permit holders, 48 will be affected by these new rules, said Beers.

Another reason the shellfishermen want the change is to "reduce access conflicts" with seaside landowners, Beers said. By eliminating commercial digging on Saturdays and Sundays, the conflicts should be lessened.

The new rules selectmen adopted at their Monday night meeting include the limited harvesting days for a bonus commercial shellfish season for April for soft shell and quahog

clams and a change that allows commercial digging within 750 ft of the mean high tide mark in three locations: Blue Fish River, Eagles Nest Cove and Blakeman's Cove at Duxbury Beach. Previously, commercial harvesters could not dig within 750 ft of the mean high tide mark in these places and this rule still applies to all other sections of the bay.

In other business, selectmen:

- witnessed the swearing in by Town Clerk Nancy Oates of newly elected or re-elected town officials.

- reorganized and made John Tuffy the chairman, Margaret Kearney vice-chairman and Andre Martecchini clerk. Martecchini had served as chairman for the past year. Selectmen reorganize every year after the election.

- voted to grant a one day liquor license for the Plymouth Philharmonic benefit on Saturday, May 15 at the home of Richard Kent on Summer St. Although it is unusual to have a public event that sells liquor at a private home, police and other officials looked into the matter and found no problems.